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Contributed Notes.

The Epistle of James and our Lord's Teaching. No student of the Epistle of James has failed to notice the sturdy common sense of the writer and his emphasis on practical Christianity. Yet it has not always been observed how fully he represents in this respect the teaching of Jesus especially in the Sermon on the Mount. Even his language is strikingly similar to our Lord's. Compare, for example, James 1 : 22, "be ye doers of the word and not hearers only," with Matt. 7 : 24, "Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them." Here precisely the same thought is in the mind of both. It is remarkable, too, that in both cases the thought is illustrated and clinched by a parable,—in James, that of the "looking glass," by Jesus, that of "the rock and the sand." These parallels have been worked out by Dr. Cox in some contributions to the *Expositor*, and by Plummer in his volume on James in the Expositor's Bible, and are worth examining. This use of parables and proverbs by James suggests that, with all his common sense, he had a fine poetical vein in his nature. He is "practical," but not "prosaic." His imagination lends liveliness to his maxims. As Cox says, "He is a born poet, though he writes no poetry." And again, "As there is nothing more difficult than to cast stale or familiar maxims into fresh and attractive forms, St. James must have been a man of rare and high natural gifts." We may be permitted to refer in this connection to an editorial paragraph in a recent number of the *STUDENT*, where the poetical element in the nature of our Lord was alluded to (Feb. 1892, p. 67). May we not reverently suggest also that from the human side, perhaps, that poetical trait both in James and in his greater Brother, may go back to the mother whose hymn of praise Luke has preserved for us. An interesting, though somewhat more distant, parallel of thought between the two brothers may be seen in the comparison of James 5 : 16 with the Lord's Prayer. In the latter the disciples are taught by the opening petitions that a right attitude toward God must precede the petition for the supply of our needs. God is first acknowledged as Father, his name is hallowed, a right relation to his Kingdom and will is proclaimed, and then the disciple is to pass to a request for "daily bread" and spiritual guidance. But this is precisely James's thought when he asserts, "the supplication of a *righteous* man avail-eth much in its working" (R. V.). Righteousness, a right attitude toward God, precedes, is the condition of prevailing prayer. G.

"Thou" and "Ye": Luke 22 : 31, 32; John 1 : 50, 51. A little point which is full of interest and instruction is brought out by the Revised Version of Luke 22 : 31, 32 by its translation of the pronouns employed. Jesus tells Simon, after the disciples' unhappy controversy about the greatness of the future, that Satan has made application for the possession of the disciples; or, if the margin is to be preferred, "has obtained them by asking"; they have been given over into his hands, *all* of them, like Job of old, for testing and proving. But Jesus adds, "but I made supplication for *thee*." It was Peter who was

especially in Jesus's mind at this time, either because of the special trial that was soon to come upon him while his faith was especially weak,⁹ or that, should he pass safely through this temptation, he might, as the recognized head of the band, rally them to the service of their risen Lord. The special purpose of this prayer was that Peter's faith might not fail. Was this prayer answered? If one confines the temptation of Peter to the scene in the High Priest's house, the scene of the three or more denials, then the answer must be in the negative. But that was far from being the strongest temptation to which Peter was subjected. The testing time was *after* his denial. The question was, Could he ever get back again to former ground? Satan had him in his power after the fall more than before. Would Peter be able to escape? The disappearance of Peter from the scene of the later trial and crucifixion of Jesus is very significant in this connection. His faith did triumph over this second and deeper temptation. He is seen among the first disciples at the tomb of the risen Saviour. And in this sense the prayer of Jesus was answered. Satan had asked for them all. In a sense he overcame them all. But not in the sense in which he was to overcome Peter. It was not the tempted Peter for whom Jesus prayed, so much as for the fallen Peter. It was that he might rise after he had fallen, not that he might not fall. It was that when he had been entrapped his faith might not desert him. It was that when he had started out on the path along which he as well as Judas ran, he might not like Judas pursue it to the end, but he might turn about (cf. A. V. "converted;" R. V. "turned again") and seek the Lord again. Which thing, indeed, he did, and became the "Under-Shepherd," to whom the Lord gave the tender and searching admonitions of John 21. A second interesting case of the interchange of pronouns is in John 1:50, 51. Here Jesus has been revealing his divine insight to Nathaniel and to the latter's wondering exclamation and confession, he replies, "*Thou* shalt see greater things than these." And the Evangelist adds, "He saith unto *him* . . . I say unto *you* (plural), *ye* shall see the heaven opened," etc. The evident mysteriousness of the reply makes it all the more interesting. Why should he have addressed to Nathaniel alone what seems to be a general statement to all of the first disciples? Or, can the plural "you" addressed to Nathaniel be interpreted to mean "such as you," i. e., Nathaniel is first told that he will see something far surpassing this exhibition of Jesus's insight. yea, that he, *and such as he* who had so quickly recognized Jesus as Messiah, who had such receptivity for the Truth, would be given to see what was far more glorious, the presence and blessing of God, the communion of the Father with the Son of Man. Such open-hearted believers in Jesus as the King of Israel would come to know Him as God manifest in the flesh, Son of God because "son of man."

G.

The Gospels and the Early Church. The primary purpose of the Gospels was to tell Christians about Christ, and their immense value to the church consists in their fulfillment of this purpose. But there is also another useful purpose which they serve in a sphere in which their usefulness is generally overlooked. We refer to the indirect testimony contained in them to the life and teachings of the primitive church. A distinction must be made between the subject of the Gospel history and the writers of it. The former did His work and passed away from earthly vision before these Gospels were committed to writing. A generation intervened, indeed, between the time of Jesus